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Ministry of Forests and Range

LITTLE SHUSWAP ASSISTS WITH BEETLE BATTLE

VICTORIA – The Little Shuswap Indian Band has secured a three-year agreement that will create new economic opportunities for the band while helping the Province fight the mountain pine beetle, Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman announced today.

"First Nations are an important partner in the battle against the mountain pine beetle," Coleman said. "We're working together to slow the rate of spread, and at the same time increasing First Nations involvement in the forest sector."

Under the agreement, the Little Shuswap will have access to more than 36,000 cubic metres of timber in the Kamloops Timber Supply Area. The volume reflects the need for increased beetle-wood harvesting within the band's asserted traditional territory.

"We will use the funds generated from this volume to replace trees lost to the beetles," said Chief Felix Arnouse.

The Little Shuswap also signed a $731,800 forest and range agreement with the Province in 2004 that provided access to more than 79,000 cubic metres of timber over five years.

To date, the Ministry of Forests and Range has reached agreements with 106 First Nations, granting access to more than 17 million cubic metres of timber and sharing $120.5 million in revenue.

Funding has also been set aside to support First Nations participation on the Province's Mountain Pine Beetle Response Team and assist in sustaining First Nations traditions and customs that could be disrupted by the infestation.

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Media contact:
Max Cleeveley
Communications Director
Ministry of Forests and Range
250 387-8486

Felix Arnouse
Chief
Little Shuswap Indian Band
250 679-3203

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